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Honorable Robert Simmons, Chairman
Committee on Homeland Security
Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing
& Terrorism Risk Assessment

Dear Chairman Simmons:


Although I appreciated your invitation to the June 8, 2006 classified briefing by Department of Homeland Security personnel regarding the recent arrests of Canadian nationals suspected of terrorism, our session left much to be desired.

While the briefers advised our staffs that the information they would be sharing would be at the "Secret" and/or "Top Secret" classified levels, I am advised by my staff that most if not all of the information they provided in fact was obtained from newspaper clippings and other media. The briefer's handout – a graph accompanying an article from the *Toronto Star* – only emphasized the purely "open-source" nature of what we were hearing.

While classified briefings can be valuable tools for Members and have their time and place, the "classified" briefing on June 8th could have been condensed into an open-source memorandum. If the Department cannot differentiate between a meaningful, classified briefing and an opportunity to share information using open-source information, I am afraid that the work ahead of I&A is even more daunting than I had previously imagined.

In the future, I hope that classified briefings will be called when there are, in fact, classified matters we will be briefed on. I can read the newspapers by myself.

Sincerely,



Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Intelligence, Information Sharing
& Terrorism Risk Assessment